

Communication Channels: How to Get the Word Out



Partnerships

How can partnerships help SNAP agencies with their outreach?

Partners can help by educating potential SNAP applicants about the benefits of their participation in SNAP and by preparing them for the application process. This can make determining eligibility of applicants more efficient.

Here is what you will find in this section:

- Ten steps for establishing a partnership;
- Useful template materials that can be tailored for local needs; and
- Examples of outreach and partnership materials.

What if I have questions about outreach and partnerships?

Go to the SNAP Web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm>. There you can find free materials such as posters, brochures, and fliers to order, as well as general information about outreach, outreach strategies, and promising practices.

Learn from your colleagues by joining the SNAP Outreach Coalition, a nationwide network of advocacy groups and partner organizations that works to promote the health and nutrition benefits of SNAP. Formed in 2003, this core group of national food banks, community and faith-based groups, and service organizations works together to end hunger and improve nutrition.

For more information about the Coalition, please visit the Web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/about.htm>. You will also find a listing of national partners that may have a local chapter with which you can collaborate.

What are the steps for developing and maintaining a partnership?

You can establish a partnership by following 10 simple steps. These steps may also be helpful if you are approached by a community organization seeking a partnership with you.

10 Steps To Developing And Maintaining Partnerships

1. Find out your State and local policies
2. Assess your customer service
3. Select a target audience
4. Determine which partners will most effectively reach your target audience
5. Research and get prepared
6. Contact your prospective partner
7. Jointly establish your outreach plan
8. Confirm the partnership roles and responsibilities in writing
9. Stay in touch with your partner
10. Evaluate your partnership

Step 1 Find Out State & Local Policies

As a State or local Government agency, there are some important things you must do before you approach partners with a proposal to work together:

- Always let people in your chain of command know of your plans.
- Be sure you have their approval to move forward with your partnership plans before you begin.

Research Your State Or Local Policies

In general, keep the following in mind as you think about your potential partnerships:

- Your State may have activities that are coordinated at the State level only.
- Your State may require approval before a local office can conduct certain types of activities.
- There may be paperwork to complete.
- Your State may already have contracts or grants with groups that could potentially be partners. Your activities must not interfere with the contract or grant.

Then make sure you understand the specific State and local policies and procedures on:

- Partnerships and the types of activities that partners can do
- Use of volunteers
- Posting of information on the Web sites of other organizations
- Working with media
- Working with businesses or retailers
- Provision of translation services
- Use of administrative funds to conduct outreach
- Contracting requirements

Does your State have an optional outreach plan?

Find out if your State has an optional plan for SNAP outreach. Such a plan may already involve grants or contracts to local organizations that you might consider as partners. Your potential partners may already have SNAP funds to design, develop, and/or print materials or conduct outreach activities.

If your State doesn't already have a plan, you may want to explore this as a possible funding source for your partnership. If the partnership is funded through the optional State outreach plan, your State grant or contract rules, such as rules regarding sole source awards, competition, and monitoring, among other things, will apply.

Step 2 Assess Customer Service

Make sure there are no customer service barriers for potential customers. Take a look around your local office and imagine how customers might view it. Assess service procedures to see if any changes might be needed as a new outreach project is implemented. Consider the following:

- Does the office offer extended hours of operation?
- Is there a child care area in the waiting room?
- How long is your application form? What languages is it in? Is it easily available? Is there a person available to help the applicant fill out the form?
- Is there a 24-hour drop-off box for applications and verification documents to make it easy for applicants to return information after normal business hours? The drop-off box also saves time, as an applicant does not need to wait to see a receptionist or eligibility worker.

Step 3 Select A Target Audience

Next, figure out what populations you want to reach through your partnership. National SNAP data shows that the most hard-to-reach and underserved populations are seniors (age 60 and older), immigrants, and the working poor. But the target audience for the community selected for an outreach project may be different. For example, your targeted community may have a large number of homeless individuals or unemployed people. You can:

- Talk to others about which groups in your community tend to be underserved.
- Work with your State office to review State- or community-specific information on underserved populations.

Step 4 Determine Partner Groups

To decide whom to choose as partners, brainstorm and make a list of organizations that your target audience trusts and uses. Seek advice from others:

- Ask staff in your office which organizations they work with on a regular basis.
- Take advantage of any advisory groups or county boards that work with the local agency to find out more about how best to reach the target group.
- Ask existing partners for input about other groups that should be involved in community outreach.
- Ask customers during the intake process for the names of groups with whom they come into contact and how they learned about SNAP.



Using Volunteers

Volunteers are enthusiastic and eager to help. If your plan calls for the use of volunteers, be sure you discuss these issues with your partner as well:

- How will you train volunteers to let them know what they can or can't do? For example, they can schedule appointments and fill out application forms. (Note that volunteers cannot certify households for SNAP benefits).
- How will you educate volunteers about SNAP?
- How will you handle volunteer turnover?
- How will you thank your volunteers?

Step 5 Research & Get Prepared

Increase your chances of success by being prepared before you contact your prospective partner.

Research

Take some time to learn as much as you can about your prospective partner. Make sure you understand the role the organization plays in the community and whom the organization serves. Following are some ways you can do this:

- Ask others in your office what they know about the prospective partner.
- Ask if anyone in your office has the name of a contact.
- Study the organization's Web site.

Get Prepared

- Collect your ideas. Be prepared for questions your partner may ask.
- Be sure you can:
 - Provide a brief overview of your organization.
 - For community partners, promote the health and economic benefits of SNAP.
 - Present the partnership as a “win-win” situation for all parties.
 - Explain the role partners can play to assist potentially eligible people in accessing SNAP.
 - Discuss the importance of the project and why a potential partner should work with you to help their customers learn about and apply for SNAP benefits.

Special Considerations For Business Partners

Although local businesses have a genuine interest in helping out the needy in their community and will most likely have a formal community relations staff member, they also are driven by profit motivation and will have to think about their bottom line. If you plan to approach a local business or retailer about partnership, you may have to emphasize the economic arguments for participation expansion more than others. Be sure you can tell retailers how SNAP participation helps their business thrive. Be sure you can tell employers how participation in SNAP will help their employees.

See end of this section for a list of activities for outreach partnerships.

Step 6 Contact Prospective Partner

As you approach potential partners, remember that enthusiasm goes a long way. But if a potential partner says “no” to your ideas, do not get discouraged. Your ideas might not fit into their schedule right now. There will be other partnership opportunities. Try the next organization on your list.

Call

First, call the potential partner to start the ball rolling and gauge his or her interest. Here are some tips for making this initial call:

- Practice the talking points in advance. Do this regardless of whether you are talking to an acquaintance or someone you don’t know.
- When speaking, use a conversational tone.
- Be respectful of your contact’s time; ask if it is a good time for a conversation.
- Offer to schedule an appointment to conduct a meeting in person.
- Invite him or her to your offices for a tour and a brief overview of the SNAP application process.

Write

If you can’t reach your contact by phone, send an email or letter. The following are some tips on composing your email or letter:

- Personalize and localize the information as much as possible. Your partner will want to know why you selected his or her group and what role you will want the partner to play on the project.
- Keep the letter short and to the point.
- Proofread your letter before sending it out.
- Promise to follow up. Don’t wait for a call. Post a reminder on your calendar and call back in a few days.

Meet

If you have scheduled a meeting with your partner, here are some helpful tips for a successful meeting:

- Confirm the meeting date, time, and equipment a day or two before the scheduled meeting.
- Consider sending your partner an agenda and some informational materials by email or mail that he or she can review before the meeting.
- Tailor your presentation to your audience. Take along materials from this toolkit or your agency that are appropriate to your audience, and leave materials for the partner to review after the meeting.
- Provide your partner with information about the SNAP application process. If you are talking with a local SNAP office, discuss how your organization will submit the application forms. Clear procedures are needed to protect the date the application was filed.

- Be clear about your role in this project.
- Be clear and direct about how you would like your partner to be involved.
- Be clear on funding. If there is no funding available, be sure that is understood.
- Bring your partnership ideas to the table.
- Listen to the ideas your future partner suggests.
- Look professional, be on time, and be respectful of your partner's time.

Step 7 Jointly Determine Plan

Once you and your partner have agreed to work together, take some time to jointly establish a plan for your outreach. Discuss your goals and what strategies or activities you will use to reach those goals.

Examples of outreach goals:

- Educate people about the nutrition benefits of SNAP.
- Increase the number of applicants who fill out and file an application form for SNAP benefits at locations other than a SNAP office.
- Increase the number of individuals prescreened for SNAP benefits.
- Increase the number of callers to your toll-free number.
- Develop a local Web site that will contain community resources or other information.
- Increase the number of hits to your Web site.
- Promote the Web site location containing SNAP application form or prescreening tool, if applicable.
- Distribute application forms at locations such as food banks.
- Promote the EBT card to possible participants as a confidential way to receive benefits.
- Promote extended hours.

You will also want to discuss the following issues with your new partner:

- How many people do you want to reach?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each partner?
- How will funding be handled?
- How will you evaluate your work?
- How will problems be resolved?

Step 8 Confirm Partnership Roles

Confirm your partnership arrangements in writing by sending a letter or email to your new partner. If the partnership is straightforward, this document can be simple. Just list the details of the partnership. You may want to include a summary of the roles and responsibilities of each partner. For an example, go to the end of this section.

Step 9 Stay in Touch

Once your partnership is established and outreach is underway, keep your partner informed and involved.

Here are some suggestions to help maintain your partnership:

- Update your partner on activities. Be sure to call or meet periodically to check in on how things are going.
- Send periodic thank you notes to the partner and volunteers. Let them know how many new people are getting SNAP benefits as a result of their efforts.
- Offer to include your partner in promotional activities like a newsletter or an event.



Tips & Tools

Establishing and Maintaining a Strong Partnership

- Present the partnership as a “win-win” situation for all parties.
- Agree on goals and objectives.
- Develop clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Practice clear and frequent communications.
- Show appreciation through recognition.

Step 10 Evaluate Your Partnership

Although partnerships can be time-consuming, they can also be a valuable part of your work. It is important to track the value of these collaborations so that you can find out if you met your goals, and what did and didn't work. You can use either process measures, outcome measures, or both, depending on the nature of your partnership.

Partnership Process Measures

- Has the number of partnerships you have developed increased since you began your alliance-building program?
- When you established your partnerships, you began with a clear list of expectations. Are those expectations being met?
- Do staff who are working on the partnerships feel they are proceeding well? For example, if a partner is filling out application forms, are these forms filled out properly or must State or local staff redo them?
- Do your partners approach you with new and creative ideas for working together?
- Have your partners provided you with new information and expertise?

Partnership Outcome Measures

- Have you seen an increase in calls to your local number?
- When clients call or come into your office, ask how they learned about SNAP. If these individuals were a part of your project, are they better prepared (for instance, form filled out and verification documents in hand) for the certification interview?
- Maintain a referral tracking document. Assign a code (like color, label, number) for your partner(s) and place the code on applications that will be distributed by them. When those applications are submitted, you will be able to see where the applicant picked up the information and track the number of referrals from that particular relationship.
- Has your ability to reach the target audience improved? Have more people from the target audience called or come into your office as a result of a partnership?
- If you host an event, such as a prescreening at a grocery store, keep track of the number of people in attendance and the number of applicants prescreened for SNAP benefits.
- If certification interviews are conducted, keep track of how many.
- If informational materials were distributed, keep track of what materials were used and how many were given out.
- Did your partners help generate media coverage that increased the awareness of SNAP benefits?

Share Your Success

Once you have been able to demonstrate success, do not forget to share it! By sharing your partnership successes, other organizations will clearly see the value and benefits of joining in the outreach effort.

You can:

- Mention your current partners when you are at meetings and conferences.
- Write up your success and submit it on SNAP's Promising Outreach Practices Web page. (See the Promising Practices section of the toolkit for more information.)

Potential Partners

Community Service Groups

- Food banks and pantries
- Community action agencies
- Homeless shelters and soup kitchens
- Family support centers (e.g., day care, domestic violence shelters, literacy, utility assistance programs)
- Legal Aid
- Salvation Army
- Goodwill
- Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) locations

Faith-Based Organizations

- Churches
- Temples
- Mosques
- Synagogues

City, County, State, Or Federal Government

- Local SNAP offices
- Local health department
- Employment assistance offices, including one-stop career centers
- Schools and technical colleges
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Property tax offices
- Mayor or city or county officials
- Housing projects
- Federal agencies (for prisoners with imminent release)
- Local Social Security office
- Local military bases or installations
- Local or regional IRS offices

Business And Labor

- Employers
- Grocery stores
- Local unions
- Transit providers
- Utility companies

Medical Community

- Doctors
- Hospitals
- Pharmacies
- Community Health Centers
- Medicaid offices
- WIC offices

Seniors' Groups

- Assisted living facilities
- Area Agencies on Aging
- AARP Foundation chapters
- Meals-on-Wheels program

Immigrant Groups

- Local consulates
- Clubes de Oriundos
- Immigrant service organizations (e.g., the Michoacan Federation, Lao American Community Service)

Media Organizations Or Channels

- Radio
- TV
- Newspapers
- Internet
- Blogs
- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube

Activities For Potential Outreach Partnerships

Community groups/agencies/other organizations can:

- Conduct SNAP eligibility prescreening.
- Provide application assistance. Distribute SNAP application forms and help potential clients fill out the forms. Explain to potential applicants what types of information and documentation the local SNAP office will need in order to complete the application process.
- Provide translation services, when appropriate.
- Include information about the nutrition and health benefits of SNAP in newsletters or other local outreach materials.
- Post posters or fliers in lobbies, waiting areas, employee break areas, health clinic checkout areas, nutrition education rooms, etc.
- Post information on their Web site and link to Step 1, the FNS eligibility prescreening tool.
- Provide SNAP information or giveaways at community events such as health or county fairs.
- Host a “nutrition/health fair” to promote SNAP benefits.

Retailers/grocers can:

- Play PSAs on in-store radio.
- Include fliers and brochures in mailings and weekly circulars.
- Include SNAP benefit information on store receipts and in grocery bags.
- Print SNAP information on grocery bags. Make it lively—a grocery bag image containing the national toll-free number is available from USDA.
- Advertise SNAP information on grocery carts.
- Design, produce, and post promotional materials about SNAP benefits in the store — posters, banners, floor graphics, recipe cards, etc. (You can request logo files at: SNAPHQ-web@fns.usda.gov.)
- Provide SNAP information in the checkout display area.
- Underwrite paid advertising on local media.
- Underwrite printing of outreach materials.
- Allow eligibility prescreening to be conducted in the store or outside of it.

Activities For Potential Outreach Partnerships

Pharmacies can:

- Include SNAP information on the patient information form that is stapled to prescription drugs.
- Include information in circulars.
- Air PSAs on in-store radio.
- Advertise SNAP information on shopping carts.
- Post information on pharmacy Web sites.
- Encourage sponsorship of health fairs where prescreening for benefits can take place.

Employers can:

- Include SNAP information in new employee packets, newsletters, job training programs, etc.
- Put a notice about a local or national toll-free number on check stubs.
- Make periodic announcements about SNAP over the intercom system.
- Post SNAP information on bulletin boards.

Transit companies can:

- Provide free advertising space on bus shelters, buses, and subways/light rail.
- Include fliers and brochures in mailings.

Utility companies can:

- Put SNAP benefits information in newsletters.
- Print information on utility bills.
- Enclose insert along with invoice.
- Allow organizations to give out informational materials or prescreen for SNAP benefits onsite.

Media organizations can:

- Air public service announcements (PSAs) and radio readers.
- Provide a disc jockey or on-air celebrity to be the official spokesperson of your outreach effort, or make an appearance at community events, such as a nutrition fair.
- Serve as a media advisor to your outreach efforts.
- Introduce groups to local advertisers who may be interested in funding newspaper, radio, or TV ads.

Get Involved!

Partners With A Common Goal

Community and faith-based groups, retailers, and anti hunger advocacy groups across the country have a common goal to reduce hunger and improve nutrition.

Strength In Numbers

By coming together in partnership, we can advance our efforts to inform individuals and families in our communities about SNAP, ensuring that everyone can eat right, even when money's tight.

Raising Awareness

There are a number of ways you can help inform members of a targeted community about the nutrition benefits of SNAP.

Ways To Inform Members Of Your Community

- Provide free SNAP resources including USDA's free trifold brochures and bookmarks (available in English and Spanish) for waiting rooms, health fairs, libraries, and community centers.
- Insert free SNAP materials in grocery bags, informational packets, new employee materials, etc.
- Include the SNAP toll-free number or Web site (www.fns.usda.gov/snap) on promotional pieces such as posters, fliers, milk or egg cartons, paper or plastic bags, store receipts, and in-store displays.
- Include information about Step 1, SNAP's online prescreening tool and application assistance in promotional pieces or make arrangements with employers or senior groups to allow individuals to use the prescreening tool to learn about their possible eligibility for SNAP benefits.
- Publish an article about the nutrition benefits of SNAP in employee or group newsletters and magazines.
- Broadcast SNAP public service announcements (PSAs) at your store or company or use your contacts to get donated time at radio stations.
- Add a link to www.usda.gov/snap from your Web page.
- Host a special SNAP prescreening event, cooking demonstration, or information fair.
- Volunteer at an activity to raise awareness about SNAP (options could include helping at a food pantry or food bank, soup kitchen, or prescreening event).
- Subscribe to the [SNAP Outreach Coalition listserv](#) and learn about other outreach efforts taking place across the country.

10 Ideas For Retailer SNAP Outreach

Help your customers learn about the nutrition benefits of SNAP.

Help your customers learn about the nutrition benefits of SNAP. SNAP benefits bring Federal funds into your community that can increase sales at your store. With SNAP benefits, your low-income customers can purchase more healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods, and dairy products. As a retailer, you can:

1. **DISPLAY SNAP** posters, fliers, magnets, and other materials. Go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm> for free USDA materials and promotional items.
2. **INVITE** local groups such as food banks, anti hunger groups, or other community or faith-based groups to staff an information table to give out SNAP information or prescreen customers for eligibility.
3. **PUT SNAP** information, such as national or local SNAP toll-free numbers, on grocery bags and in weekly circulars and bulletins.
4. **PUBLISH SNAP** materials in languages spoken in your community.
5. **PRINT SNAP** promotional messages on store receipts.
6. **BROADCAST SNAP** public service announcements in the store.
7. **HOST** nutritious food tastings or cooking demonstrations. Give out recipe cards that contain nutrition information and the national or local SNAP toll-free number.
8. **FORM** partnerships with local community and advocacy groups. Host a “health fair” to conduct SNAP eligibility prescreenings. Invite local media to the event.
9. **PARTNER** with EBT processors to educate cashiers about the benefits of SNAP.
10. **ENCOURAGE** EBT processors to add recorded messages to help-desk numbers promoting the nutrition benefits of SNAP and encouraging SNAP clients to “tell a friend.”



Tips & Tools

There may be a host of potential partners interested in joining your effort to boost SNAP enrollment and inform people of the nutrition benefits of the program. Retailers, businesses, community-based organizations, and government entities can all play a vital role in SNAP outreach.

The Benefits of SNAP

SNAP Helps Low-Income Families:

- Stretch food dollars. Those receiving SNAP benefits spend more money on food than other low-income households.
- Fight obesity through education. Nutrition educators teach SNAP participants the importance of a quality diet, how to prepare healthy foods, and how to make healthy choices.
- Put food on the table for their children. SNAP benefits are an investment in our future. Nearly 50 percent of participants are children.
- Keep elderly family members independent. For the elderly, participation can help improve nutritional status and well-being and increase independence. Nine percent of SNAP recipients are age 60 or older.
- Make the transition to self-sufficiency. SNAP helps participants become financially stable, and provides needed support as they transition to self-sufficiency. Half of all new participants will leave the program within nine months.

SNAP Helps States and Local Economies:

- Support local food retailers. The average monthly SNAP benefit is approximately \$222, which is spent in local grocery stores.
- Generate economic activity. Every \$5 in new SNAP benefits generates a total of \$9.20 in community spending.
- Support farms. On average, \$1 billion of retail food demand by SNAP recipients generates 3,300 farm jobs.
- Leverage Federal funds. SNAP benefits are Federal funds. By increasing the number of people in SNAP, communities can bring Federal money into their States and communities.

SNAP Helps Businesses and Workers:

- Achieve optimal performance. Employees whose food needs are met at home may have higher productivity and take fewer sick days for themselves and their children.
- Attain self-sufficiency. SNAP benefits supplement the food budgets of low-income workers so they can stay independent and work toward self-sufficiency.

Partner Letter Template

[DATE]

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP CODE]

Dear Mr./Ms. [NAME]:

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the first line of defense against hunger. On behalf of [ORGANIZATION NAME], I am writing to invite you to lend your support to [STATE/CITY/TOWN'S] SNAP outreach effort by *[Describe the request — an activity you would like the organization to participate in, such as: hosting a health fair or prescreening event; volunteering; distributing informational fliers; promoting events; etc.].*

The goal of this outreach effort is to ensure that everyone who is eligible for SNAP knows about the program and is able to access benefits. Our organization is helping to promote the nutrition benefits of SNAP.

[Provide local information on what your organization is doing, who you plan to target in your campaign, and the need in your community (number of potentially eligible individuals that are not being served for this type of effort.)]

We hope you will join us in supporting [ORGANIZATION or COALITION NAME's] outreach efforts; we would be honored to work with you. With your support, we are confident that we can reach more of [CITY/STATE's] individuals and families not yet enrolled in SNAP. By participating, *[List benefits to organization such as: reinforces position as community leader; provides opportunity for positive media exposure; offers community service opportunities; etc.].*

I will contact you in the next few days to further discuss the vital role you can play in helping our community. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at [PHONE NUMBER] should you have any questions. I have also enclosed additional information on SNAP benefits for your review.

Again, we hope you can join us in supporting this important effort, and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]

Partnership Agreement Letter Template



Tips & Tools

How can I initiate a partnership? If a relationship is not currently in place, a good way to initiate a partnership is by sending a letter to a community relations, marketing, or communications contact. Your letter should outline your outreach effort, provide background information on your organization and SNAP, and describe the nature of your partnership request. This is a template letter that you can use with your own letterhead.

[DATE]
[NAME]
[TITLE]
[BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP CODE]

Dear Mr./Ms. [NAME]:

Thank you so much for agreeing to partner with [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] to help us reach those low-income individuals and families in our community who can benefit from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Our partnership is part of a larger national effort to ensure that everyone who is eligible for SNAP benefits receives them.

Below is an outline of the partnership specifics we discussed:

In-Kind Donations

- Financial contribution for production of materials such as pamphlets, bus/subway ads, bus/subway shelter ads, pot holders, recipe cards, etc.
- In-store space to conduct nutrition events, prescreenings, etc.
- Placement of PSA or donated print advertisement space, etc.
- Personnel support to help fill out SNAP application forms, obtain verification documents, etc.

Promotional Opportunities

- Appearance of company name in SNAP media materials.
- Visibility through advertising, media and event signage
- Your company's logo on SNAP signage and in outreach materials.
- Opportunity for a company representative to attend/participate at event(s).

We're so glad you see the value of partnering on such an important outreach effort. Please feel free to call me at [PHONE NUMBER] with any questions. Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
[TITLE]

Promising Practices

What is a promising practice?

“Promising practices” are everywhere. New ideas or refinements of existing ideas are continuously being implemented by State and local programs to educate and help individuals access their programs. Promising practices may involve big or little changes to existing projects to improve service delivery. They may or may not have evidence of positive results from evaluations; in fact, they might just have a general intuitive appeal rather than a proven effect. Promising practices sometimes prompt completely different ideas. Sometimes, promising practices are those “A-ha!” moments — something that makes sense but you did not think significant right away. Unfortunately, practical knowledge in one community that could lead to significant improvements in another often goes unshared.

Who is compiling our promising practices?

FNS is compiling promising SNAP practices to assist States, local agencies, community and faith-based organizations, and others to share their best ideas.

Why is FNS sharing the practices?

The collection of promising practices is an effort to find and share outreach or customer service models that can help increase participation in SNAP. Through this collection of promising practices, timely information on program and policy innovations is disseminated so that all stakeholders may benefit from the experiences of their peers across the country. The sharing of ideas can stimulate program changes, spark creative exchanges, and serve as a launching pad for the next generation of program innovations. It can inspire a dynamic examination of ways to improve service delivery systems for people eligible for, applying for, and participating in SNAP.

Whom can I contact for more information?

The project contact person listed by each promising practice can provide further information. FNS has developed an informal process of collecting promising practices and updates the Web site continually so check back often.

How can I share my promising practice?

Submit your practice to FNS. Tell about something new you did or how you put an innovative twist on an existing idea. Go ahead and brag about the response you received — from your co-workers, managers, or your customers. This is an opportunity to shine while you give others ideas to improve or develop their projects. Worried that your idea may not be new? Not to worry; something that is “old hat” to some may be a complete revelation to others.

Are you looking for a new idea?

On the Web site, you will find information that you can use in your own project. You can learn about promising practices from around the country as well as from other programs.



**Promising Practices
are Online**

Go to: www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach
and click on “Promising Practices.”

Who can use the Web site?

The Web site is for State and local SNAP agencies as well as Federal/State program staff, volunteers, community members, policymakers, funders, researchers, or anyone else who wants to develop a project or improve the quality of their existing programs.

Some Examples Of Promising Practices

Media Outreach

- **Vermont** Partnering with Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger and Vermont Grocer's Association, the State SNAP agency held a press conference at a supermarket to announce changes in SNAP that make it easier to apply.

Developing Partnerships

- **California** In partnership with the local food bank, Alameda County Social Services facilitated periodic SNAP outreach trainings for organizations interested in helping their own clients apply for SNAP benefits. Participants received a training manual complete with tools and resources to help them get started in their own SNAP outreach efforts.
- **California** Alameda County Food Bank provided on-site "Food Stamp Enrollment Clinics" for clients of other community-based organizations. Bilingual staff from the food bank prescreened clients for potential eligibility and assisted them in completing the application.
- **Connecticut** The State agency sent mailings to soup kitchens, food pantries, and shelters to ask them to make SNAP applications and information available to their customers.
- **New York** The Korean Grocers Association in New York City published SNAP information in Korean.
- **Pennsylvania** Pathmark grocery stores in underserved areas of Philadelphia hosted eligibility prescreening events.
- **Virginia** Americorps volunteers in rural counties of the State went door-to-door to provide information on SNAP. They talked to people about SNAP benefits while grocery shopping, hosted outreach gatherings, prescreened for potential eligibility, and helped complete application forms.

Using PSAs

- **California** The Food Bank of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties aired television ads to market the nutrition and health benefits of SNAP.
- **California** The Food Bank of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties developed a 5-minute video in English and Spanish that answers 12 commonly asked questions about SNAP benefits. The video was distributed to health and social service agencies on California's central coast.